

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

Inventor(s): Poliakoff, et al.

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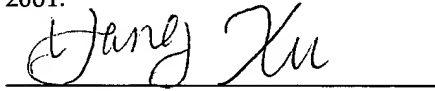
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Yang Xu

Commissioner for Patents
Washington, DC 20231

PRELIMINARY AMENDMENT

Dear Sir:

Please amend the International Application No. PCT/GB00/00673 upon entry into the U.S. National Phase under Chapter II as follows:

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please amend claims 1, 4-8, 10-13, and 15-16 as follows:

1. (Amended) A process in which a first hydroxyl-substituted organic compound selected from the formulae R^1CH_2OH , R^1R^2CHOH and $R^1R^2R^3COH$ is exposed, optionally in the presence of one or more further organic compounds selected from second hydroxyl-substituted organic compounds of the formulae R^4CH_2OH , R^5R^6CHOH , and $R^7R^8R^9COH$ and carbonyl compounds of the formula $R^{10}R^{11}CO$, to a heterogeneous catalyst which is able to provide a source of acid in a continuous flow reactor under supercritical conditions or at near-critical conditions for the fluid that is acting as solvent,